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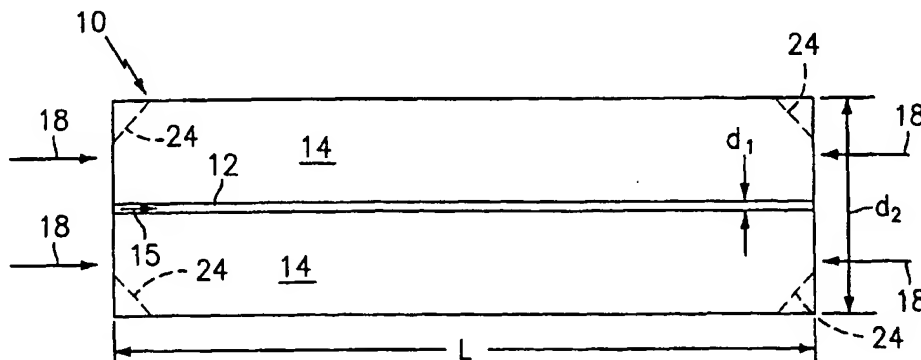
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(54) Title: LARGE DIAMETER OPTICAL WAVEGUIDE, GRATING, AND LASER



(57) Abstract: A large diameter optical waveguide, grating, and laser includes a waveguide (10) having at least one core (12) surrounded by a cladding (14), the core propagating light in substantially a few transverse spatial modes; and having an outer waveguide dimension (d2) of said waveguide being greater than about 0.3 mm. At least one Bragg grating (16) may be impressed in the waveguide (10). The waveguide (10) may be axially compressed which causes the length L of the waveguide (10) to decrease without bucking. The waveguide (10) may be used for any application where a waveguide needs to be compression tuned, e.g., compression-tuned fiber gratings and lasers or other applications. Also, the waveguide (10) exhibits lower mode coupling from the core (12) to the cladding (14) and allows for higher optical power to be used when writing gratings (16) without damaging the waveguide (10). The shape of the waveguide (10) may have other geometries (e.g., a "dogbone" shape) and/or more than one grating or pair of gratings may be used and more than one core may be used. The core and/or cladding (12, 14) may be doped with a rare-earth dopant and/or may be photosensitive. At least a portion of the core (12) may be doped between a pair of gratings (50, 52) to form a fiber laser or the grating (16) or may be constructed as a tunable DFB fiber laser or an interactive fiber laser within the waveguide (10). The waveguide may resemble a short "block" or a longer "cane" type, depending on the application and dimensions used.

Large Diameter Optical Waveguide, Grating, and Laser

Cross References to Related Applications

5 Copending US Patent Applications, Serial No. (Cidra Docket No. CC-0036B),
entitled "Bragg Grating Pressure Sensor", and Serial No. (CiDRA Docket No. CC-
0129B), entitled "Compression-Tuned Bragg Grating and Laser", and Serial No.
(CiDRA Docket No. CC-0078B), entitled "Tube-Encased Fiber Grating", filed
contemporaneously herewith, contain subject matter related to that disclosed herein.

10

Technical Field

This invention relates to optical waveguides, gratings and lasers and more
particularly to optical waveguides, grating and laser having a large diameter.

15

Background Art

It is known that optical fibers are stronger in compression than in tension, as
described in US Patent No. 5,469,520, entitled "Compression Tuned Fiber Grating" to
Morey, et al. It is also known that Bragg gratings embedded in the optical fiber may
be used in compression to act as a tunable filter or tunable fiber laser, as is described
20 in US Patent No. 5,469,520, entitled "Compression Tuned Fiber Grating" to Morey, et
al and US Patent No. 5,691,999, entitled "Compression Tuned Fiber Laser" to Ball et
al., respectively, which are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

25

To avoid fiber buckling under compression, the technique described in the
aforementioned US Patent Nos. 5,469,520 and 5,691,999 uses sliding ferrules around
the fiber and grating and places the ferrules in a mechanical structure to guide, align
and confine the ferrules and the fiber. However, it would be desirable to obtain a
configuration that allows a fiber grating to be compressed without buckling and
without sliding ferrules and without requiring such a mechanical structure.

30

Also, it is known to attach an optical fiber grating to within a glass tube to
avoid buckling under compression for providing a wavelength-stable temperature
compensated fiber Bragg grating as is described in US Patent No. 5,042,898, entitled
"Incorporated Bragg Filter Temperature Compensated Optical Waveguide Device", to

Morey et al. However, such a technique exhibits creep between the fiber and the tube over time, or at high temperatures, or over large compression ranges.

It is also known that Bragg gratings in optical fibers may create unwanted coupling between the core and cladding modes of a fiber. The larger the mode field overlap between the two modes, the larger the coupling. Such coupling creates unwanted optical losses in the fiber.

It is also known that when writing Bragg gratings in optical fibers, if high power is used, the fiber may be damaged due to surface ablations on the surface of the fiber caused by the high optical power.

Summary of the Invention

Objects of the present invention include provision of a waveguide configuration that is suitable for compression without buckling and without requiring sliding ferrules or a mechanical supporting structure for the ferrules and/or that is suitable for reducing core to cladding coupling and/or that allow for increase optical power to be used when writing gratings.

According to the present invention, a large diameter optical waveguide, comprises an outer cladding having at least one inner core disposed therein which propagates light; said core propagating light in substantially a few spatial modes; and having an outer waveguide dimension of said waveguide being greater than about 0.3 mm.

According further to the present invention, said core has an outer core dimension of less than about 12.5 microns. According further to the present invention, said core propagates light in substantially a single spatial mode.

According further to the present invention, the waveguide has a cylindrical shape. According further to the present invention the core has a circular end cross-sectional shape. According further to the present invention the outer dimension of the waveguide is greater than about 0.9 mm. According still further to the present invention a reflective element is embedded in the waveguide.

The present invention provides a significant improvement over prior art optical fibers by providing a glass (or silica-based) optical waveguide having a large

diameter which allows for axial compression tuning without buckling the waveguide. The invention provides a surface to push against instead of having to bond, fuse or otherwise attach such surface to an optical fiber. The present invention also reduces coupling between the core and cladding modes due to the increased end cross-sectional area between the core and cladding of the waveguide. Further, the invention allows for more optical power to be used when writing a grating in the waveguide without ablating the waveguide surface, due to the increased thickness of the cladding.

One or more gratings may be embedded (or imprinted) in the waveguide. The waveguide may be used for compressing a grating or laser to provide compression tuning in many applications. The waveguide may also be used for other applications that do not require a grating but require a compressible optical waveguide. Also, the large outer diameter allows the waveguide to resist damage from handling which typical bare optical fibers would exhibit.

The waveguide may be etched to provide alternative side (or axial) cross-sectional geometries, e.g., a dogbone shape, that provides enhanced force to length change (or strain) sensitivity. Also, the waveguide may resemble a short "block" or a longer "cane" type, depending on the application and dimensions used. Further, the waveguide may be made in long lengths (on the order of inches, feet, or meters) then cut to size as needed for the desired application. Also, one or more gratings, fiber lasers, or a plurality of cores or concentric or ring cores, may be located within the waveguide cladding, thereby allowing for multiple waveguiding paths within the waveguide.

The foregoing and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent in light of the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments thereof.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a side view of a large diameter optical waveguide, in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a side view of a large diameter optical waveguide with a grating embedded therein, in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a side view of a large diameter waveguide having a pair of gratings embedded therein, in accordance with the present invention.

5 Fig. 4 is a side view of a large diameter waveguide having a DFB laser embedded therein, in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 5 is an end view of a large diameter optical waveguide having two optical cores, in accordance with the present invention.

10 Fig. 6 is an end view of a large diameter optical waveguide having an elliptical core, in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 7 is an end view of a large diameter optical waveguide having a plurality of concentric optical cores, in accordance with the present invention.

15 Fig. 8 is a graph of an optical transmission profile of a grating in a standard optical fiber showing cladding mode coupling, in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 9 is a graph of an optical transmission profile of a grating in a large diameter optical waveguide showing reduced cladding mode coupling, in accordance with the present invention.

20 **Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention**

Referring to Fig. 1, a large diameter optical waveguide 10, has at least one core 12 surrounded by a cladding 14. The waveguide 10 comprises silica glass (SiO_2) based material having the appropriate dopants, as is known, to allow light 15 to propagate in either direction along the core 12 and/or within the waveguide 10. The core 12 has an outer dimension d_1 and the waveguide 10 has an outer dimension d_2 .

25 The cladding 14 has an outer dimension d_2 of at least about 0.3 mm and the core 12 has an outer dimension d_1 such that it propagates only a few spatial modes (e.g., less than about 6). For example for single spatial mode propagation, the core 12 has a substantially circular transverse cross-sectional shape with a diameter d_1 less than about 12.5 microns, depending on the wavelength of light. One standard
30 telecommunications nominal core diameter is 9 microns (and outer waveguide

diameter of 125 microns). The invention will also work with larger or non-circular cores that propagate a few (less than about 6) spatial modes, in one or more transverse directions.

Further, the optical waveguide 10 may be a birefringent, polarization
5 maintaining, polarizing, multi-core, or multi-cladding optical waveguide, or planar waveguide (where the waveguide is rectangular shaped), or other waveguides meeting the properties described herein.

Also, other materials for the optical waveguide 10 may be used if desired. For example, the waveguide 10 may be made of any glass, e.g., silica, phosphate glass, or
10 other glasses, or made of glass and plastic, or solely plastic. For high temperature applications, an optical waveguide made of a glass material is desirable.

Also, the waveguide 10 may have tapered (or beveled or angled) outer corners or edges 24 to provide a seat for the waveguide 10 to mate with another part (not shown) and/or to adjust the force angles on the waveguide 10, or for other reasons.
15 The angle of the beveled corners 24 are set to achieve the desired function.

Also, the outer diameter d_2 of the cladding 14 and the length L have values that will resist buckling when the waveguide 10 is placed in axial compression as indicated by the arrows 18. The length L of the waveguide 10 may be determined experimentally or analytically as discussed more hereinafter.

Referring to Fig. 2, the waveguide may have a Bragg grating 16 impressed (or embedded or imprinted) therein. A Bragg grating 16, as is known, is a periodic or aperiodic variation in the effective refractive index and/or effective optical absorption coefficient of an optical waveguide, such as that described in US Patent No. 4,725,110 and 4,807,950, entitled "Method for Impressing Gratings Within Fiber
20 Optics", to Glenn et al; and US Patent No. 5,388,173, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Forming Aperiodic Gratings in Optical Fibers", to Glenn, which are hereby incorporated by reference to the extent necessary to understand the present invention. The grating 16 may be in the core 12 and/or in the cladding 14 (not shown). Any wavelength-tunable grating or reflective element embedded, etched, imprinted, or
25 otherwise formed in the waveguide 10 may be used if desired. The waveguide 10 may be photosensitive if a grating 16 are to be written into the waveguide 10. As used
30

herein, the term "grating" means any of such reflective elements. Further, the reflective element (or grating) 16 may be used in reflection and/or transmission of light.

The grating 16 has a grating length L_g which is determined based on the application and may be any desired length. A typical grating 16 has a grating length L_g in the range of about 3 - 40 mm. Other sizes or ranges may be used if desired. The length L_g of the grating 16 may be shorter than or substantially the same length as the length L of the waveguide 10. Also, the core 12 need not be located in the center of the waveguide 10 but may be located anywhere in the waveguide 10.

Incoming light 27 may be launched into the waveguide 10 and/or the core 12 by splicing a suitable standard optical fiber 22 (having a cladding 26 and a core 25) to one or both axial ends 28 of the waveguide 10 using any known or yet to be discovered techniques for splicing fibers or coupling light from an optical fiber into a larger waveguide, that provides acceptable optical losses for the application.

Alternatively, incident light 34 may be directly incident on the core or be focussed into the core 12 by a lens 32 which focuses input light 30.

If a grating 16 is in the waveguide 10, light 34 is incident on the grating 16 which reflects a portion thereof as indicated by a line 36 having a predetermined wavelength band of light, and passes the remaining wavelengths of the incident light 34 (within a predetermined wavelength range), as indicated by a line 38 (as is known).

It is known that for a mechanically unguided silica optical fiber under compression, the maximum allowable length L_{cr} of the waveguide 10 can be without buckling depends on the critical applied load F_{cr} , and can be analytically determined based on the buckling theory of columns, as described in A. Iocco, et al, "Bragg Grating Fast Tunable Filter for Wavelength Division Multiplexing", IEEE, Journal of Lightwave Technology, Vol. 17, No. 7, July 1999, pp 1217-1221, which is incorporated herein by reference and described briefly below for illustrative purposes.

As discussed in the aforementioned article, the Euler buckling load formula for a column is:

$$F_{cr} = \frac{\pi^2 EI}{(\alpha L)^2} \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

where F_{cr} is the critical force, L is the pre-compressed unguided length, and α is the effective-length factor which is 0.5 for a column perfectly fixed (rigid) and straight at both ends, where and where $I = \pi r^4/4$ the inertia modulus for a circular cross section, and r is the radius of the column (or waveguide).

5 The relationship between the axial stress and axial strain for a material in the elastic domain and in the axial (or longitudinal) direction, is given by:

$$\sigma = E \epsilon \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

where E is the Young modulus which is $7.25 \times 10^4 \text{ N/mm}^2$ for silica and ϵ is the axial strain which is defined by $\Delta L/L$, where ΔL is the axial displacement and L is axial length.

10 If a Bragg grating is in the waveguide, the relationship between axial strain and wavelength shift for the grating is as follows:

$$\frac{\Delta \lambda}{\lambda} = (1 - p_e) \epsilon \quad \text{Eq. 3}$$

where P_e is the photo-elastic coefficient which is about 0.21 for silica λ is the initial wavelength and $\Delta \lambda$ is the wavelength shift. Substituting Eqs. 1,2,3 and taking into account that the axial stress σ is given by the applied force multiplied by the waveguide surface area, the critical length L_{cr} is calculated as follows:

$$L_{cr} = \frac{\pi r}{2\alpha} \sqrt{\frac{\lambda(1 - p_e)}{\Delta \lambda}} \quad \text{Eq. 4}$$

20 For example, for a mechanically unguided standard telecommunications silica-based optical fiber having an outer diameter of 125 microns ($r = 0.0625 \text{ mm}$ in Eq. 1) and an initial wavelength λ of about 1550 nm, $L_{cr} = 1.08 \text{ mm}$ before buckling occurs for a wavelength shift $\Delta \lambda$ of 40 nanometers (nm). Accordingly, a standard optical fiber would need to be no longer than 1.08 mm long to not buckle under an axial strain equivalent to shift a grating 40 nm. However, in practice, this length will be shorter than 1.08 mm because the end conditions are in general not perfectly rigid and straight. This may be accounted for by adjusting the value of α in Eq. 1 for the waveguide end conditions.

We have found that the wavelength shift (or tuning range) $\Delta\lambda$ in nm that can be achieved without buckling for a silica waveguide having a given diameter (d) and length (L) is as follows;

$$\Delta\lambda = \frac{(\pi^2 d^2)(1200)}{16L^2 \alpha^2 (FS)} \quad \text{Eq.5}$$

5 where α is a waveguide end condition scale factor or “fixity scale factor” (discussed hereinbefore with Eq. 1) and FS is a safety scale factor. A value of $\alpha=4$ for ideally fixed end conditions and $\alpha=1$ for ideal pinned end conditions. We have found that a value for α of about 0.6 is representative for a waveguide with coned seat end conditions, i.e., the tapered edges 24 (30 to 60 degrees from vertical; however, other
10 angles may be used). Other values for α may be used depending on the geometry of the end conditions, the geometry of the waveguide, e.g., dogbone or straight, discussed hereinafter, and other factors. The value for FS is set based on dimensional tolerances, reliability, repeatability, statistical data variations, and other factors.

Accordingly, we have found that an outer diameter d2 of greater than about
15 400 microns (0.4 mm) provides acceptable results (without buckling) for a waveguide length L of 5 mm, over a grating wavelength tuning range of about 10 nm (with FS=1.3). For a given outer diameter d2, as the length L increases, the wavelength tuning range (without buckling) decreases. Other diameters d2 for the waveguide 10, may be used depending on the overall length L of the waveguide 10 and the desired
20 amount of compression length change ΔL or wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$. For example, for an outer diameter d2 of 1 mm, having a length L of 5mm, the tuning range without buckling is about 64nm (with FS=1.3); and for an outer diameter of 1 mm and a length L of about 20 mm, the tuning range without buckling is about 4nm (with FS=1.3). An outer diameter d2 as low as 0.3 mm will likely provide acceptable performance,
25 depending on the grating length and desired tuning range.

The waveguide 10 may be made using fiber drawing techniques now known or later developed that provide the resultant desired dimensions for the core and the outer diameter discussed hereinbefore. As such, the external surface of the waveguide 10 will likely be optically flat, thereby allowing Bragg gratings to be written through

the cladding similar to that which is done for conventional optical fiber. Because the waveguide 10 has a large outer diameter compared to that of a standard optical fiber (e.g., 125 microns), the waveguide 10 may not need to be coated with a buffer and then stripped to write the gratings, thereby requiring less steps than that needed for conventional optical fiber gratings. Also, the large outer diameter d2 of the waveguide 10, allows the waveguide to be ground, etched or machined while retaining the mechanical strength of the waveguide 10. Thus, the present invention is easily manufacturable and easy to handle. Also, the waveguide 10 may be made in long lengths (on the order of many inches, feet, or meters) then cut to size as needed for the desired application.

Also, the waveguide 10 does not exhibit mechanical degradation from surface ablation common with optical fibers under high laser fluence (or power or intensity) during grating exposure (or writing). In particular, the thickness of the cladding between the cladding outer diameter and the core outer diameter causes a reduced power level at the air-to-glass interface for a focussed writing beam.

Referring to Figs. 8,9, we have also found that the present invention also reduces coupling between the core and cladding modes due to the increased end cross-sectional area between the core and cladding of the waveguide. Thus, a grating 16 written in the core 12 of the waveguide 10 exhibits less optical transmission loss and a exhibits a cleaner optical profile than a conventional fiber grating because the large cladding region dissipates coupled cladding modes, thereby reducing the coupling of the core 12 to the cladding 14 modes. In general, the greater the difference in cross-sectional area between the core 12 and the cladding 14 the smaller the mode field overlap and the lower the coupling to the cladding modes. The thickness of the cladding 14 between the cladding outer diameter and the core outer diameter may be set to optimize this effect. Fig. 8 shows an optical transmission profile for a standard grating in an optical fiber having a 9 micron core diameter and 125 micron outer diameter. Such a grating exhibits coupling to the cladding modes as indicated by the spikes 100. Fig. 9 shows an optical transmission profile for a standard grating written in the waveguide 10 having a 9 micron core diameter and a 3 mm outer diameter which exhibits greatly reduced coupling to the cladding modes as

indicated by the lack of spikes on the profile. Other diameters of the core 12 and waveguide 10 may be used if desired such that the cladding modes are reduced to the desired levels.

5 Also, the waveguide 10 has a large end surface area to attach an optical fiber pigtail to the waveguide 10 or for attaching multiple optical fibers to multiple cores in the waveguide 10. Also, the size of the waveguide 10 has inherent mechanical rigidity which improves packaging options and reduces bend losses.

10 The side cross-section of the outer surface of the waveguide 10 may have a varying geometry, depending on the application. For example, the waveguide 10 may have a "dogbone" shape having a narrow central section 20 and larger outer sections 21. The dogbone shape may be used to provide increased sensitivity in converting axial force to length change ΔL and/or wavelength shift $\Delta\lambda$ of the grating 16 and may be achieved by etching, grinding, machining, heating & stretching, or other known techniques.

15 The waveguide 10 may have end cross-sectional shapes other than circular, such as square, rectangular, elliptical, clam-shell, octagonal, multi-sided, or any other desired shapes, discussed more hereinafter. Also, the waveguide may resemble a short "block" type or a longer "cane" type geometry, depending on the length of the waveguide and outer dimension of the waveguide.

20 Referring to Fig. 3, for any of the embodiments described herein, instead of a single grating encased within the waveguide 10, two or more gratings 50,52 may be embedded in the waveguide 10. The gratings 50,52 may have the same reflection wavelengths and/or profiles or different wavelengths and/or profiles. The multiple gratings 50,52 may be used individually in a known Fabry Perot arrangement.

25 Further, one or more fiber lasers, such as that described in US Patent No. 5,666,372, "Compression-Tuned Fiber Laser" (which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent necessary to understand the present invention) may be in the waveguide 10 and may be compression-tuned. In that case, the gratings 50,52 form a cavity and the waveguide 10 at least between the gratings 50,52 (and may also include
30 the gratings 50,52, and/or the waveguide 10 outside the gratings, if desired) at least a portion of which is doped with a rare earth dopant, e.g., erbium and/or ytterbium, etc.,

and the lasing wavelength would be tuned accordingly as the force on the waveguide 10 changes.

Referring to Fig. 4, another type of tunable fiber laser that may be used is a tunable distributed feedback (DFB) fiber laser, such as that described in V.C.

5 Lauridsen, et al, "Design of DFB Fibre Lasers", Electronic Letters, Oct. 15, 1998, Vol.34, No. 21, pp 2028-2030; P. Varming, et al, "Erbium Doped Fiber DGB Laser With Permanent $\pi/2$ Phase-Shift Induced by UV Post-Processing", IOOC'95, Tech. Digest, Vol. 5, PD1-3, 1995; US Patent No. 5,771,251, "Optical Fibre Distributed Feedback Laser", to Kringelbotn et al; or US Patent No. 5,511,083, "Polarized Fiber
10 Laser Source", to D'Amato et al. In that case, a grating 84 is written in a rare-earth doped core and configured to have a phase shift of $\lambda/2$ (where λ is the lasing wavelength) at a predetermined location 56 near the center of the grating 16 which provides a well defined resonance condition that may be continuously tuned in single longitudinal mode operation without mode hopping, as is known. Alternatively,
15 instead of a single grating, the two gratings 50,52 (Fig. 3) may be placed close enough to form a cavity having a length of $(N + \frac{1}{2})\lambda$, where N is an integer (including 0) and the gratings 50,52 are in rare-earth doped fiber. The gratings 50,52 may have the same reflection wavelengths and/or profiles or different wavelengths and/or profiles.

Alternatively, the DFB laser 234 may be located on the fiber 10 between the
20 pair of gratings 220,222 (Fig. 8) where the fiber 10 is doped with a rare-earth dopant along at least a portion of the distance between the gratings 220,222. Such configuration is referred to as an "interactive fiber laser", as is described by J.J. Pan et al, "Interactive Fiber Lasers with Low Noise and Controlled Output Power", E-tek Dynamics, Inc., San Jose, CA, internet web site www.e-tek.com/products/whitepapers. Other single or multiple fiber laser configurations may be disposed on
25 the fiber 10 if desired.

Alternatively, the DFB laser 84 may be located between a pair of gratings 90,92 where the core 12 is doped with a rare-earth dopant at least a portion of the distance between the gratings 90,92. Such configuration is referred to as an
30 "interactive fiber laser", such as is described by J.J. Pan et al, "Interactive Fiber Lasers with Low Noise and Controlled Output Power", E-tek Dynamics, Inc., San

Jose CA, internet web site www.e-tek.com/products/whitepapers. Other single or multiple fiber laser configurations may be disposed in the waveguide 10 if desired.

Referring to Fig. 5, alternatively, two or more cores 60,62,63,65 may be located within the waveguide 10. The core 12 (Figs. 1-4) may be positioned axially
5 anywhere within the waveguide 10 and need not be centered along the center line of the waveguide 10. Also, cores (Fig. 5) may be located close to each other (to be substantially touching or optically coupling to each other) as shown by the cores 63,65, and/or separated by any desired distance within the waveguide 10, as shown by
10 cores 60,62. For multiple cores with different diameters, each of the cores should meet the requirements described herein for the core 12.

Referring to Fig. 6, alternatively, the core 12 may have an asymmetrical end cross-sectional shape such as elliptical shape 64 or a rectangular shape 66. For asymmetrical end cross-sectional shapes, the smaller dimension d1 would be used for
15 determining the maximum core dimension. In that case, the core may propagate only one mode in the direction of the dimension d1 and propagate a few modes in the other direction. Also, the end cross-sectional shape of the core may have other shapes such as a square, clam-shell, octagonal, multi-sided, or any other desired shapes.

Also, the outer geometry may have end cross-sectional shapes, such as a rectangle shown by dashed lines 80 if desired. In that case, the larger dimension d2
20 would be used for determining the minimum outer dimension.

Referring to Fig. 7, alternatively, the waveguide may have multiple concentric cores 68,70 or a ring or annulus core 72. In that case, the dimension d1 for calculating the minimum dimension for the core would be the core having the smallest outer
25 dimension.

The dimensions and geometries for any of the embodiments described herein are merely for illustrative purposes and, as such, any other dimensions may be used if
30 desired, depending on the application, size, performance, manufacturing requirements, or other factors, in view of the teachings herein.

It should be understood that, unless stated otherwise herein, any of the features, characteristics, alternatives or modifications described regarding a particular

embodiment herein may also be applied, used, or incorporated with any other embodiment described herein. Also, the drawings herein are not drawn to scale.

Although the invention has been described and illustrated with respect to exemplary embodiments thereof, the foregoing and various other additions and
5 omissions may be made therein and thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. An optical waveguide, comprising:
5 an outer cladding having at least one inner core disposed therein which propagates light;
said core propagating light in substantially a few spatial modes; and
having an outer waveguide dimension of said waveguide being greater than about 0.3 mm.
10
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said core has an outer core dimension of less than about 12.5 microns.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said outer dimension of said waveguide is
15 greater than about 0.9 mm.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said few spatial modes comprises less than about six spatial modes.
- 20 5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said core propagates light in substantially a single spatial mode.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a length of said waveguide is greater than 3 mm and less than a buckling length for a predetermined value of said outer waveguide
25 dimension and a predetermined axial compressive strain.
7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a reflective element disposed in said waveguide.
- 30 8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said reflective element comprises a Bragg grating.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said reflective element is disposed in said core.
- 5 10. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of reflective elements embedded therein.
11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said waveguide comprises a plurality of said cores.
- 10 12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said waveguide is doped with a rare-earth dopant along at least a portion of said waveguide.
- 15 13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said waveguide has at least one pair of reflective elements disposed therein and said waveguide is doped with a rare-earth dopant along at least a portion of the distance between said pair of elements to form a fiber laser.
- 20 14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said waveguide is doped with a rare-earth dopant where said reflective element is located and said reflective element is configured to form a DFB laser.
- 25 15. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of said waveguide has a cylindrical shape.
16. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said core comprises a circular end cross-sectional shape.
- 30 17. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said core comprises an asymmetrical cross-sectional shape.

18. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said waveguide has a shape that provides a predetermined sensitivity to a length of said wavelength due to a change in axial force on said waveguide.

5 19. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said shape of said waveguide comprises a dogbone shape.

20. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said outer waveguide dimension is such that optical coupling from said core to cladding modes is less than optical coupling to
10 cladding modes that exists when said diameter is less than 0.3 mm.

21. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said outer waveguide dimension is such that optical coupling from said core to cladding modes is substantially eliminated.

15 22. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said outer dimension of said waveguide is a predetermined value, said value being about 0.3 mm, 0.4 mm, 0.5 mm, 0.6 mm, 0.7 mm, 0.8 mm, 0.9 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.2 mm, 1.4 mm, 1.6 mm, 1.8 mm, 2.0 mm, 2.1 mm, 2.3 mm, 2.5 mm, 2.7 mm, 2.9 mm, 3.0 mm, 3.3 mm, 3.6 mm, 3.9 mm, 4.0 mm, 4.2 mm, 4.5 mm, 4.7 mm, or 5.0 mm.

20 23. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said length of said waveguide is a predetermined value, said value being about 3 mm, 5 mm, 7 mm, 9 mm, 10 mm, 12 mm, 14 mm, 16 mm, 18 mm, 20 mm, 21 mm, 23 mm, 25 mm, 27 mm, 29 mm, 30 mm, 32 mm, 34 mm, 36 mm, 38 mm, 40 mm, 45 mm, 50 mm, 55 mm, 60 mm, 65
25 mm, 70 mm, 75 mm, 80 mm, 85 mm, 90 mm, 95 mm, or 100 mm.

24. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said outer dimension of said waveguide is greater than a predetermined value, said value being about 0.3 mm, 0.4 mm, 0.5 mm, 0.6 mm, 0.7 mm, 0.8 mm, 0.9 mm, 1.0 mm, 1.2 mm, 1.4 mm, 1.6 mm, 1.8 mm, 2.0 mm, 2.1 mm, 2.3 mm, 2.5 mm, 2.7 mm, 2.9 mm, 3.0 mm, 3.3 mm, 3.6 mm, 3.9 mm, 5 4.0 mm, 4.2 mm, 4.5 mm, 4.7 mm, or 5.0 mm.

25. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said length of said waveguide is greater than a predetermined value, said value being about 3 mm, 5 mm, 7 mm, 9 mm, 10 mm, 12 mm, 14 mm, 16 mm, 18 mm, 20 mm, 21 mm, 23 mm, 25 mm, 27 mm, 29 10 mm, 30 mm, 32 mm, 34 mm, 36 mm, 38 mm, 40 mm, 45 mm, 50 mm, 55 mm, 60 mm, 65 mm, 70 mm, 75 mm, 80 mm, 85 mm, 90 mm, 95 mm, or 100 mm.

26. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said length of said waveguide is at least 3 mm. 15

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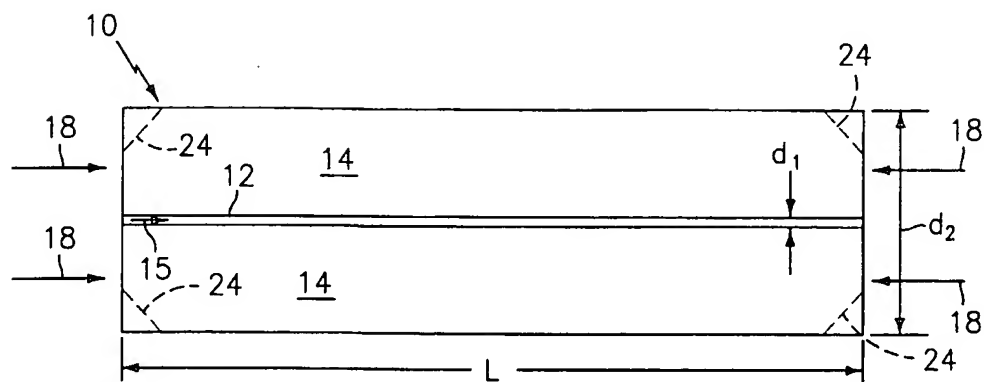


FIG. 1

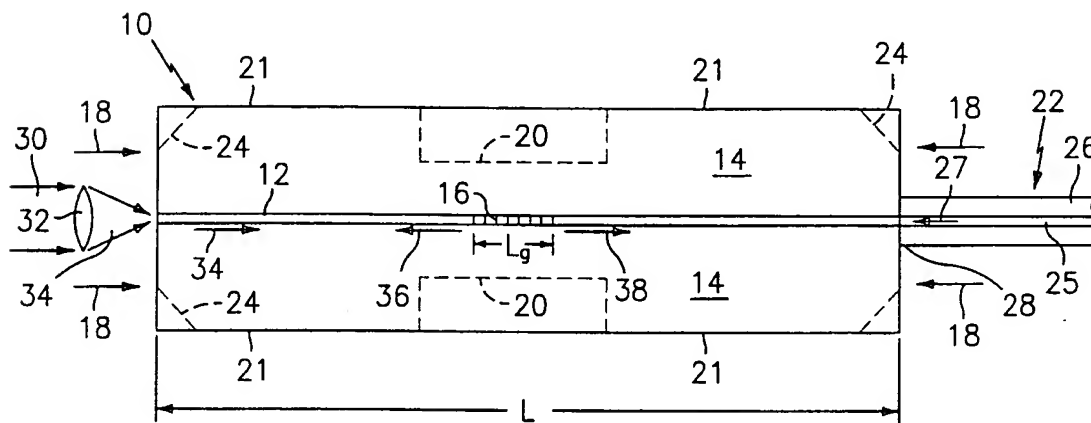


FIG. 2

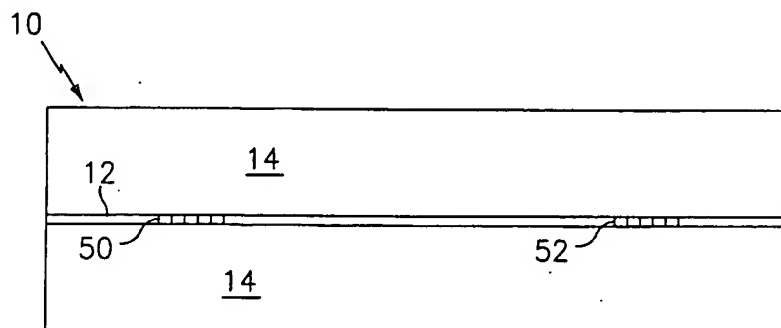
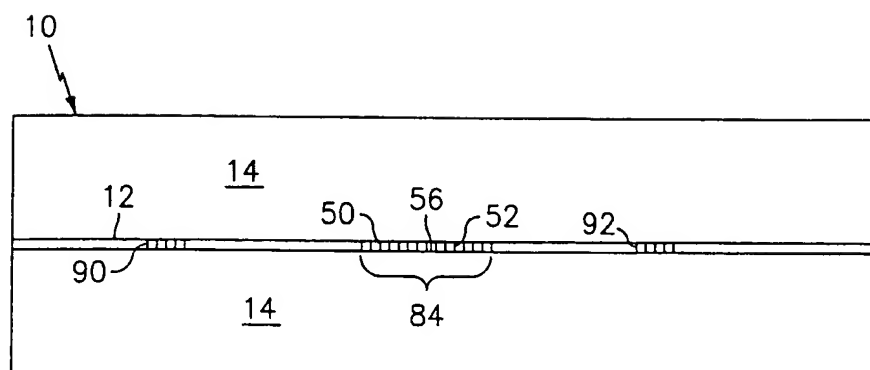
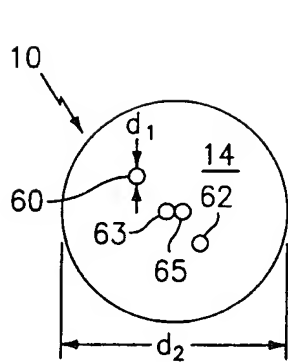
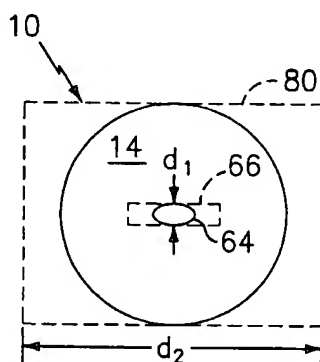
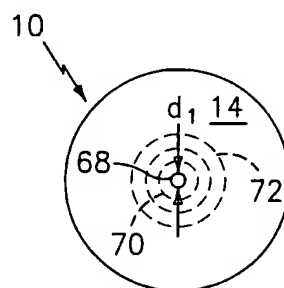


FIG. 3

*FIG. 4**FIG. 5**FIG. 6**FIG. 7*

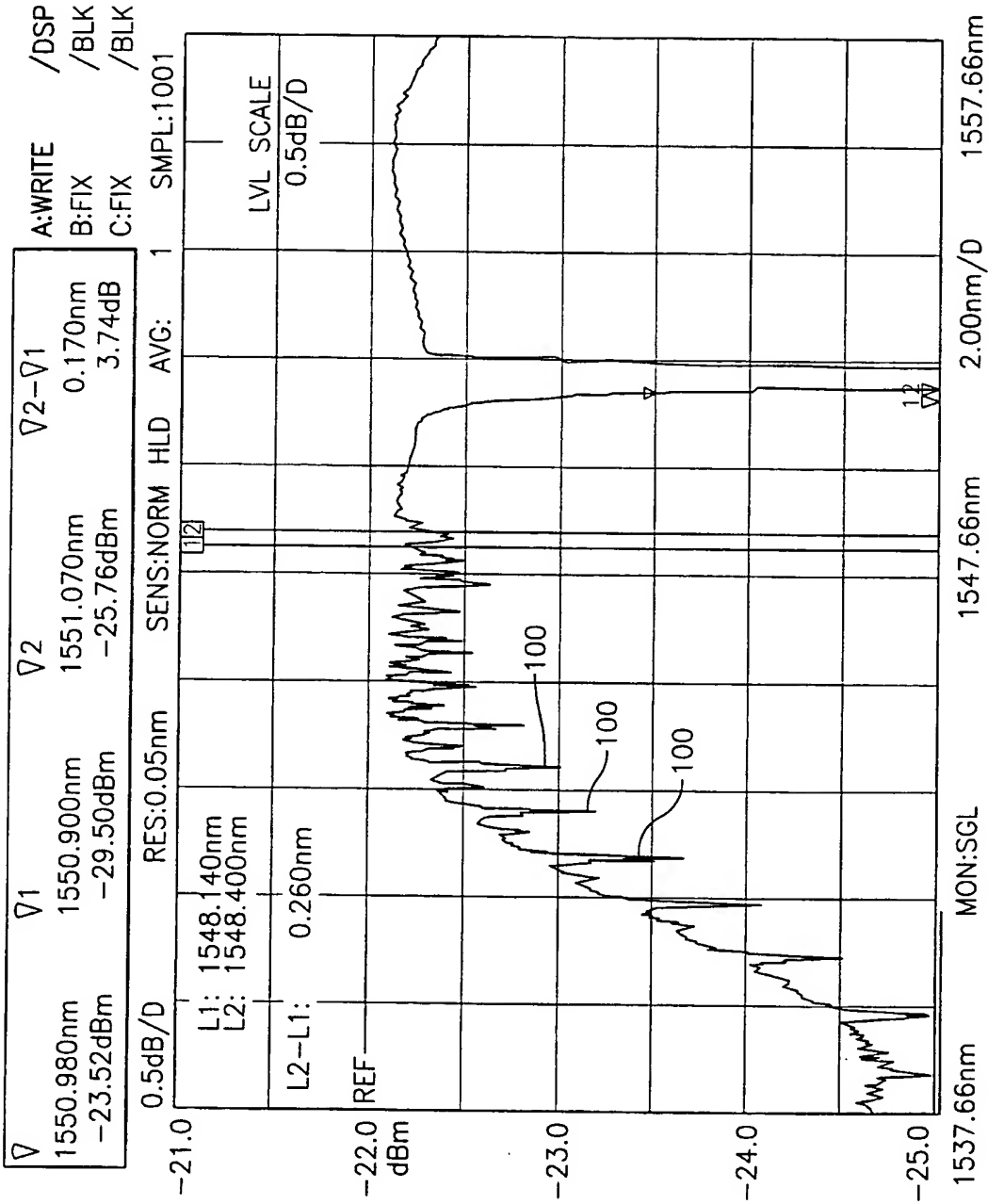


FIG. 8

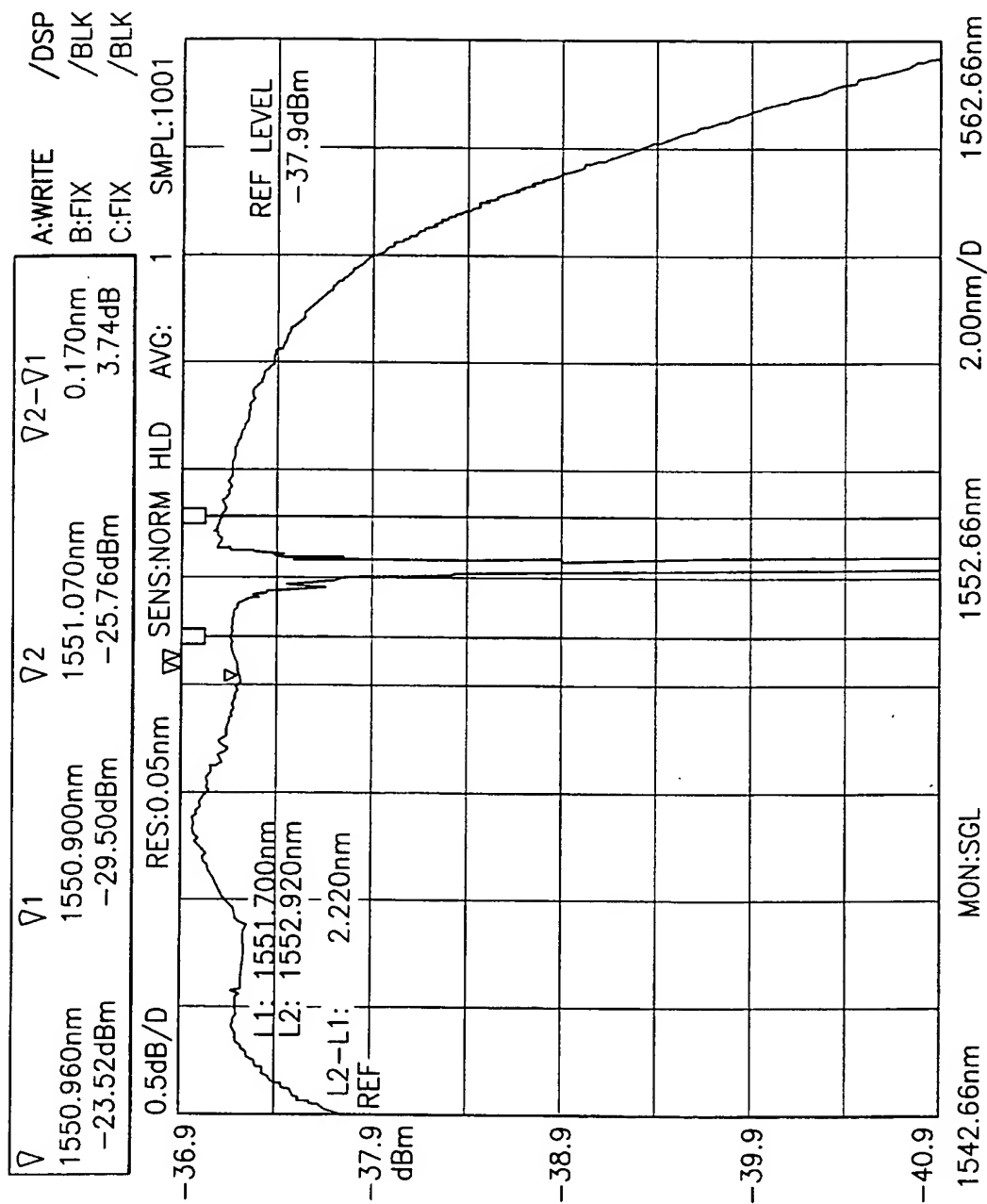


FIG. 9